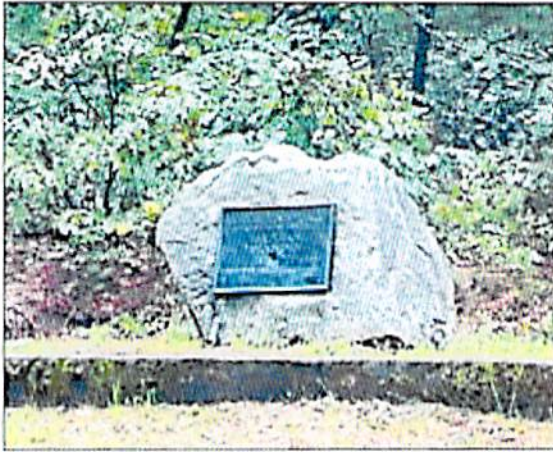


A Yankee with Vision



The Frederick B. Knapp Memorial located on Mayflower Street.



BY STEVE DONOVAN

Conservation recently finished sprucing up the Frederick B. Knapp Memorial on Mayflower Street. The boulder with its brass plaque memorializes a unique man's fascination with and love for forests.

Knapp was raised in Plymouth but spent summers here as a youth. In 1886 he became a Duxbury resident when he and his wife, Fanny, purchased what is now known as the King Caesar House. Knapp, then 29, was the superintendent of buildings at Harvard College. He and Fanny had been looking all over the state for a building to house a preparatory school for boys. The Weston family home on Powder Point was in an advanced state of disrepair when Knapp first discovered it for sale. Within days he had purchased and begun refurbishing it into the headmaster's house for the Powder Point School for Boys, where he served as principal for 23 years. At the end of his tenure two teachers took over his school and, in 1925, merged it with Tabor Academy.

It could be argued that had Knapp not acquired the old Weston homestead it might well have been razed. It had not been occupied for six years and was in terrible shape.

In addition to founding the Powder Point School for Boys, Frederick Knapp also served at times as both town forester and chief of the volunteer fire department. He is credited with organizing a fire watch able to pinpoint forest fires by triangulating from high points like the Standish Monument and the First Parish Church belfry. He also was president of the Duxbury Rural Society, helped form both the South Shore Forest Warden's Association and the Plymouth County Forester's Association and started a school of forestry.

Frederick Knapp initiated a great trend in Duxbury when he convinced town fathers that green space should be purchased for both passive enjoyment and active recreation. For many years he had urged them to set aside land for a forest. In 1929 they did, buying 80 acres of white pine forest along Mayflower Street. Originally called the Duxbury Town Forest, in 1933 it was re-named in his honor as the Frederick B. Knapp Town Forest. Since then Duxbury has added hundreds of acres to the 80 he saw purchased.

When Duxbury's famous forester finally passed away, he was honored in a unique way. His coffin was covered with pine and hemlock boughs and interwoven with pussy willows. One heartfelt eulogy ended with these words: 'He was a fine type of good old Yankee with broad understanding, a great fund of sympathy, and every inch a man!'

Sources: King Caesar of Duxbury, the Duxbury Book and Duxbury, a Guide, Carolyn Ravenscroft of The Drew Archival Library and Tony Kelso, Town Historian.



**Frederick B. Knapp
in his elder years.**



**Knapp the year he bought
the Weston homestead.**